Gravity Railroad program kicks off Society's lecture series

The first program in the Carbondale Historical Society's 1983 Lecture and Film Series was presented in Marian Hall Auditorium, St. Joseph's Hospital, on Thursday evening, February 17. The program, sponsoed jointly by the Historical Society and St. Joseph's Hospital, was presented by S. Robert Powell, John V. Buberniak and Robert J. Tomaine.

The topic for the evening was the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company's Gravity Railroad from Carbondale to Honesdale. S. Robert Powell, the principal speaker, opened the presentation with a summary history of the Gravity Railroad. Powell's history was divided into five parts, namely:

I. 1823-41: Formation of the D&H Canal Company; proposed plans for transporting coal from Carbondale to the canal at Honesdale; John B. Jervis' plan for the Gravity Railroad (five up-hill planes between Carbondale and the top of the Moosic Mountains, three down-hill planes between Farview and the canal basin at Honesdale); the opening of the canal on October 16, 1828; the Stourbridge Lion; the opening of the Gravity Railroad on October 9, 1829.

II. 1841-56: James Archbald's plan for the Gravity Railroad (five double-tracked up-hill planes between Carbondale and the top of the Moosic Mountains, two down-hill planes between Farview and Honesdale); James Archbald's plan for a "light track" (planes 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17) between Honesdale and Waymart; the seven-mile extension of the Gravity Railroad from Carbondale to Archbald (two north-bound planes, numbers 26 and 27; one south-bound plane, the Back Plane) in 1843.

II! 1856-66: The redesigned "loaded track" of 1866 (eight up-hill and four down-hill planes between Carbondale and Honesdale); the extension of the Gravity Railroad from Archbald to Valley Junction (two south-bound planes, numbers 21 and 22; three north-bound planes, numbers 23, 24 and 25) in 1858; the extension of the Gravity Railroad from Valley Junction to Providence in 1860; Five Gravity Railroad locomotives (Major Sykes, C.P. Wurts, Honesdale, Lackawanna, Issac N. Seymour).

IV. 1866-98: The new "light track" from Waymart to Farview (planes 18, 19 and 20); and 14-mile level between Farview and Archbald; Farview Park; Shepherd's Crook; the connection between the "light track" and the "loaded track" at Bushwick, just south of Carbondale, so west-bound passenger trains could roll into Carbondale to a point called Lookout Junction; passenger service on the Gravity Railroad; Philip Hone's trip to Carbondale over the Gravity Railroad, June 16-23, 1830.